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Native and Nonnative Teachers of L2 Pronunciation: Effects on Learner Performance

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ABSTRACT

Both native and nonnative language teachers often find pronunciation a difficult skill to teach because of inadequate training or uncertainty about the effectiveness of instruction. But nonnative language teachers may also see themselves as inadequate models for pronunciation, leading to increased uncertainty about whether they should teach pronunciation (Golombek & Jordan, 2005). Although studies have regularly shown that instruction is effective in promoting pronunciation improvement (Saito, 2012), it is not known if improvement depends on the native language of the instructor, nor if learners improve differently depending on whether their teacher is native or nonnative. This study investigated the effect of teachers' first language on ratings of change in accentedness and comprehensibility. Learners in intact English classes were taught one class by a nonnative- and one by a native-English-speaking teacher. Each teacher taught the same pronunciation lessons over the course of 7 weeks. Results show that native listeners' ratings of the students' comprehensibility were similar for both teachers, despite many learners' stated preference for native teachers. The results offer encouragement to nonnative teachers in teaching pronunciation, suggesting that, like other language skills, instruction on pronunciation skills is more dependent on knowledgeable teaching practices than on native pronunciation of the teacher.

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Introduction + Literature review.

Despite its importance in research and teaching, teachers often do not address pronunciation adequately because of lack of training (Foote, Holtby, & Derwing, 2011). Those who are not native speakers may face a further hurdle. Anecdotally, they may feel insecure about teaching pronunciation simply because they are not native speakers. Thus, they need not only training (like most teachers) but also confidence that their pronunciation teaching can be effective. There is growing evidence that teaching pronunciation leads to improvement, but little is known about whether having a nonnative or native teacher makes a difference in effecting changes in students' pronunciation.

Pronunciation teaching in general has mostly been shown to be effective for the improvement of both segmental and suprasegmental features of English (Couper, 2003, 2006; Derwing, Munro, & Wiebe, 1997, 1998; Kennedy & Trofimovich, 2010; Neri, Mich, Gerosa, & Giuliani, 2008; Saito, 2007; Saito & Lyster, 2012). In a recent analysis of 15 studies focusing on the effectiveness of pronunciation instruction (Saito, 2012), 13 studies reported improvement following instruction. Lee, Jang, and Plonsky (2014), in a meta-analysis looking at over 80 studies, found that pronunciation instruction had a large effect size on improvement. Both studies were silent on whether teachers were native or nonnative speakers of the languages they taught.

One of teachers' biggest challenges in teaching pronunciation has been not having sufficient teaching materials (Breitkreutz, Derwing, & Rossiter, 2001; Macdonald, 2002). However, this is no longer a serious issue because of the tremendous increase in print and online materials for a wide variety of pronunciation topics as well as greater choice in teacher resource books (Derwing, 2013). More serious challenges for teachers of English as a second language (ESL) include contextually appropriate materials, instructional methods, adequate pedagogical content knowledge (Baker & Murphy, 2011), and assessing and monitoring students' improvement (Macdonald, 2002). All these challenges affect both native-English-speaking teachers of English (NESTs) and nonnative-English-speaking teachers of English (NNESTs).

Even though NEST and NNEST categories include speakers whose clarity varies widely, some challenges may apply to either NESTs or NNESTs in general. For instance, NESTs might have difficulties in understanding the needs and problems of a particular group of learners compared to the NNESTs who share the same linguistic background with the students (Ma, 2012; Rao, 2008). Difficulties that might be particular to NNESTs include concerns about their second language (L2) accent (Golombek & Jordan, 2005) and lack of confidence (Bernat, 2008; Brinton, 2004; Llurda & Huguet, 2003; Ma, 2012; Rajagopalan, 2005). As a result, NNESTs may not acknowledge themselves as good pronunciation models (Ma, 2012) although they may be

confident in regard to other areas of language. Such beliefs are illustrated by a preservice NNEST (Yan, 2010) who always felt unsure about the pronunciation of new vocabulary. She added that her confidence was low even for words whose pronunciation she thought she knew well, and she always had her students listen to the audio files recorded by native speakers. However, the same preservice teacher had high confidence in explaining grammar rules. The next section of this article will present research findings related to the perceptions and attitudes toward NNESTs in teaching pronunciation.

NESTS AND NNESTS IN ESL/EFL TEACHING

Native-English-speaking teachers constitute a quarter of ESL and EFL (English as a foreign language) teachers (Canagarajah, 1999, 2005; Kachru, 1996), but a *native speaker fallacy* (Phillipson, 1992) promotes native speakers as target models and ideal teachers (Selvi, 2010, 2014). Research exploring ESL and EFL students' perceptions and attitudes toward teachers show that native language is a major (through unfairly implemented) influence on teacher confidence, student beliefs about effectiveness of a teacher, and administrators' willingness to hire (Benke & Medgyes, 2005; Boyle, 1997; Mahboob, Uhrig, Newman, & Hartford, 2004; Maum, 2003; Moussu, 2002, 2006; Pacek, 2005; Walkinshaw & Duong, 2012). Hiring practices around the world show a preference for NESTs (Kirkpatrick, 2006; Mahboob, 2010; Shin, 2008) because of claims that learners want to be taught by NESTs (Clark & Paran, 2007). Recently, Mahboob and Golden (2013) analyzed 77 job advertisements from the Middle East and East Asia and showed that discriminatory practices in hiring English language teachers based on native language continue despite findings that students recognize that NESTs and NNESTs both have advantages in teaching.

For pronunciation, research shows that students prefer NESTs (Boyle, 1997; Jin, 2005; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002; Moussu, 2006; Rubrecht, 2007; Watson Todd & Pojanapunya, 2009) because they are perceived to be better models (Chen, 2008; Gürkan & Yüksel, 2012; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002). NNESTs can be perceived as inadequate because of L2 accents (Ma, 2012) though students can sometimes appreciate the merits of both NESTs and NNESTs (Alseweed & Daif-Allah, 2012; Chen, 2008; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002). Flege and Liu (2001) say that the use of English with other nonnative speakers is likely to result in inauthentic L2 input. If the input comes from speakers of a learner's own L1, it may reinforce the kind of errors the learners themselves might be apt to make (p. 532).

However, there is no convincing evidence for this assertion.

In brief, students' perceptions of NNESTs and NESTs in relation to teaching pronunciation may vary depending on the accent of the teacher (Butler, 2007; Ma, 2012; Moussu, 2006), the physical appearance of the teacher (Braine, 2005; Golombek & Jordan, 2005), the students' proficiency levels (Madrid & Cañado, 2004), the students' previous experience with NNESTs (Braine, 2005), perceptions of teachers' skill at teaching pronunciation (Ma, 2012; Madrid & Cañado, 2004; Mahboob, 2004), and the teachers' strength in speaking confidently and fluently (Reves & Medgyes, 1994). Of these, the accent of the teacher, physical appearance, and the students' proficiency levels may be particularly important. Munro, Derwing, and Morton (2006) have demonstrated that L2 learners evaluate the accentedness of nonnative speech in much the same way that native-English-speaking listeners do. This suggests that students are likely to be attentive to the pronunciation of their teachers and use this information to judge the teacher's suitability as a pronunciation teacher. Overlapping with accentedness is the physical appearance of the teacher, which can affect perceptions of nativeness (often in conjunction with conceptions of race) and/or competence (Golombek & Jordan, 2005; Kubota & Lin, 2006); can cause difficulties in understanding because of beliefs about the speaker's perceived competence (Rubin, 1992); and can lead, as indicated above, to discrimination in hiring practices (e.g., Buckingham, 2014). Students' proficiency levels may also affect preference for native teachers, with preference perhaps increasing as ability in the L2 increases (Madrid & Cañado, 2004).

Students' previous experiences with NNESTs also affect preferences. In Moussu (2002), students reported more positive attitudes toward their NNESTs after a semester. Moussu (2006) noted that students who previously had NNESTs had better attitudes toward them compared to the students who had not been taught by a NNEST. However, some students cited teachers' experience, preparedness, qualifications, and professionalism as more influential factors (Liang, 2002; Moussu & Llurda, 2008; Pacek, 2005; Walkinshaw & Duong, 2012). Liang (2002) proposed that teachers' level of professionalism rather than ethnic or language background is important (see also Selvi, 2010).

However, students' perceptions and attitudes toward NNESTs and pronunciation are complex. Moussu and Llurda (2008) reported that students do not necessarily have negative attitudes toward nonnative teachers because of their accents, but they have more positive attitudes toward teachers with native accents. However, teachers with accented speech are sometimes perceived to be less qualified or less intelligent (Butler, 2007; Luksha & Solovova, 2006). The accent issue is actually a significant source of discomfort for NNESTs (Jenkins, 2007), and even native speakers from dispreferred accents may suffer discrimination

based on difference from a supposed standard (Lippi-Green, 2011). The influence of research on World Englishes (WE), in which no single English dialect or variation is a standard (Mahboob, 2010), is a counterweight to the native accent bias seen in teacher preferences. In addition, Mahboob (2010) reminds us that "being a native speaker of a standard inner circle variety of English is not sufficient to be a successful English teacher" (p. 8). The opposite is equally true. Being a nonnative speaker is not sufficient to disqualify someone from successfully teaching any aspect of language. Corroborating this, Derwing and Munro (2005) advocate that the issue of NS (native speaker) versus NNS (nonnative speaker) status is irrelevant in and of itself. Instead, a focus must be placed on ensuring that teachers have an appropriate level of proficiency in English, that they have the requisite knowledge and skills for classroom teaching, and that they are able to employ pedagogically sound principles in the classroom (pp. 180–181).

Thus, one should be cautious of unconscious or conscious bias toward either group of teachers. Selvi (2014) writes that assuming people will be ideal English teachers just because it is their native language is misguided. An equally misguided assumption is that an English teacher is an ideal teacher just because it is their second language. Both are fallacies, the latter a "nonnative speaker fallacy" (Selvi, 2014, p. 589) and the former a native speaker fallacy.

Many researchers and students acknowledge the strengths of both groups of teachers in any language teaching program (Alseweed & Daif-Allah, 2012; Braine, 2005, 2010; Cheung, 2002; Mahboob, 2004; Matsuda & Matsuda, 2001; Park, 2009; Rao, 2008; Wu & Ke, 2009). This reasonable conclusion, however, does not seem to apply to pronunciation teaching. Although both NESTs and NNESTs face challenges, the assumption of NEST superiority in pronunciation teaching remains unexplored. Can NNESTs be as effective as NESTs in teaching pronunciation? This study seeks to fill this gap and answer the following questions:

1. How similar are raters' judgments of students' accentedness and comprehensibility in classes taught by an NEST and an NNEST teacher?
2. How do students evaluate their teacher's effectiveness as a pronunciation teacher?

METHODOLOGY

We used an embedded mixed-methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007) for investigating the effectiveness of and perceptions

toward native and nonnative pronunciation teachers. The design consisted of quantitative and qualitative data collection where the qualitative data played a supplemental role in explaining the quantitative results (Figure 1). Two concurrent 7-week classes were formed, one with a native teacher and one with a nonnative teacher. Before and after the pronunciation course, students took a pretest and a posttest to elicit examples of read and spontaneous speech. At the time of the pretest and posttest, students were interviewed and given a questionnaire to collect qualitative data. The speech samples were prepared for listening using a randomized block design. Two different groups of native-English-speaking raters (see section on raters for details about the choice of raters) evaluated students' speech for accentedness and comprehensibility to determine whether there was a difference between classes taught by the NEST and NNEST. The first group (Rating Task 1) rated read speech; the second group (Rating Task 2) rated spontaneous speech. Results from the quantitative data analysis and qualitative data from interviews and questionnaires provide an explanation of the treatment outcomes.

Accentedness and Comprehensibility

Since Munro and Derwing's (1995) seminal study, ratings of intelligibility, accentedness, and comprehensibility, three partially related measures, have been commonly used in evaluations of pronunciation improvement. Intelligibility (not examined in this study) is defined in terms of the ability of a listener to successfully decode words in speech. (We did not measure intelligibility in this study because it could not show changes in performance. Intelligibility is measured by the ways in which speech can be successfully transcribed [Munro & Derwing, 1995]. Using the exact same sentence opens the task to familiarity biases. Using different sentences raises questions about

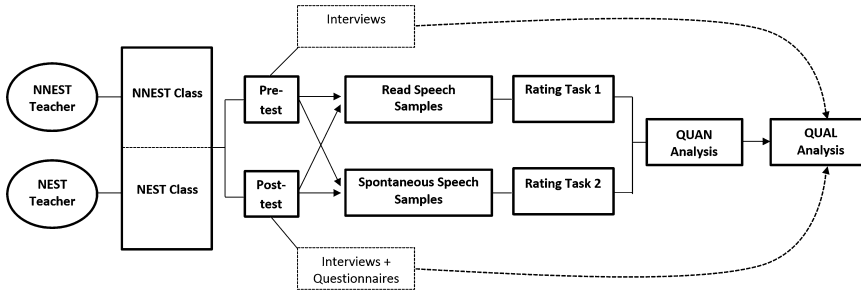

FIGURE 1. Embedded mixed-methods design.

equivalence of the stimuli.) Accentedness is defined as the amount of difference from the accent in a given locale, and comprehensibility is defined as the amount of work it takes listeners to process speech. This study used only accentedness and comprehensibility in measurement of change from pretest to posttest. Both accentedness and comprehensibility were measured using scales based on Munro and Derwing's 1–9 Likert scales. That is, accentedness was rated from having *no foreign accent* (1) to having *a very strong foreign accent* (9). Comprehensibility was rated as *extremely easy to understand* (1) to *impossible to understand* (9). (A parallel view of spoken language understanding is found in Smith and Nelson, 1985, although its uses of intelligibility, comprehensibility, and interpretability have not been as fully operationalized for pronunciation research. A more recent treatment of this approach can be found in Nelson, 2011.)

Accentedness is primarily tied to pronunciation. Comprehensibility, on the other hand, includes both pronunciation and nonpronunciation factors (Saito, Isaacs, & Trofimovich, 2015). Isaacs and Trofimovich (2012), for example, constructed an oral performance rating scale using 19 quantitative speech measures from four areas: phonology, fluency, linguistic resources, and discourse. Of the 19 measures, 18 showed correlations with comprehensibility, including 5 of 6 in the area of phonology (i.e., pronunciation), as well as all measures for the other three areas. Their final scale included five features that were most strongly correlated with comprehensibility: word stress, lexical type frequency, mean length of run, story breadth, and grammatical accuracy. In our methodology, the key features identified for a rating scale were not relevant. Raters in our study evaluated only sentences, not discourse. Word stress was not targeted in any way, being dependent on the types of words students chose to use. All sentences used were grammatically accurate to control for the effect of grammar. Also, the use of sentences alone made story breadth, lexical type frequency, and mean length of run irrelevant for our study. Thus, our measure of comprehensibility was one that was based on raters' response to the spoken language in a more global sense, that is, in relation to difficulty for listeners in processing the spoken sentences. This type of comprehensibility judgment has been shown to be related to pronunciation (e.g., Derwing et al., 1998; Munro & Derwing, 1995).

The Raters

Two groups of native-English-speaking raters evaluated students' speech for accentedness and comprehensibility to determine whether there was a difference between classes taught by the NEST and

NNEST. Both sets of raters were first- and second-year college students recruited from introductory linguistics and introductory writing classes at a large research university in the midwestern United States. Raters had only beginning foreign language learning experience and had had minimal contact with speakers of other languages (Table 2). They were thus inexperienced in regard to foreign-accented English. Isaacs and Thomson (2013) argue that such raters are a valid group of expert raters that experience foreign-accented speech similarly to average listeners. This type of expert rater group has been used extensively in studies of accentedness and comprehensibility (e.g., Munro & Derwing, 1994, 1995). Derwing and Munro (2015) reviewed studies of accent judgments by both trained and untrained raters and found that all demonstrated a "negative relationship between AOL [age of learning] and pronunciation scores" (p. 31). Because expert raters had no clear benefit, we used the raters who were inexperienced with foreign-accented English because it was easier to control for their experience. For this reason, we also did not use nonnative-English-speaking raters because their experience with certain types of accented speech (e.g., Chinese L1 raters listening to Chinese English speech or Spanish English speech) may have made them more or less tolerant in their ratings. Because our speakers had a variety of L1s, we had no way to predict whether their ratings would be consistent. Each rater signed an informed consent form and received payment for participation.

The Students

Students were recruited from the university community through messages posted in various colleges. Out of an initial pool of 60 interested people, we chose 32 students; the remaining students were excluded either because of scheduling conflicts or because their pronunciation was too high or low for the class level (based on the judgment of the first author during individual interviews; the first author has taught pronunciation for 30 years and has trained teachers for 15 years). Most of those who were excluded could not meet at the scheduled class times, some had little need of pronunciation instruction, and one potential student could not read English at a sufficiently high level. With the 32 students, two classes were formed. Classes were matched for language background, but drop-offs changed our distribution (e.g., one Vietnamese student dropped out, a work schedule change forced a Portuguese-speaking subject to change classes). We wanted to end up with at least 10 students in each class, so we made the classes larger to account for attrition. The anticipated drop-off occurred, with 10 subjects from the NEST teacher's group and 8 from

the NNEST teacher's group finishing the class. Participants were from varied language backgrounds and had intermediate to advanced levels of spoken English. Ten were students, four were spouses of students or faculty/staff, two were visiting scholars, and two were from the local community (Table 1).

The Pronunciation Class

Two concurrent courses lasting 7 weeks were designed for the study. Neither was a regularly scheduled university class. Each class met twice a week for 75 minutes, either on Monday/Wednesday or on Tuesday/Thursday. The same content was covered in each class each day. The

TABLE 1
Characteristics of the Nonnative and Native Teachers' Classes

	Nonnative teacher's class (*n*)	Native teacher's class (*n*)
Initial subjects	16	16
Final subjects	8	10
L1 background		
Chinese	7	5
Spanish	1	1
Portuguese	0	2
Russian	0	1
Vietnamese	0	1
Gender		
Female	4	4
Male	4	6
Age		
20–29	4	3
30–39	2	6
40 or older	2	1
University affiliation		
Graduate student	6	4
Postdoctorate/visiting scholar	1	2
Faculty/staff	0	2
Other (family of university affiliate or alumnus)	1	2
Total time in the United States or other English-dominant countries		
0–24 months	3	7
24 months or more	5	3
Age at start of English learning		
0–9	1	1
10–19	6	8
20 or older	1	1
Years of formal English education (in a classroom)		
0–3	1	1
4–10	3	7
11 or more	4	2

teachers and the first author met each week to plan the class, discuss the materials and students' progress, and make adjustments, which allowed both teachers to stay on the same schedule and use the same exercises. Class time involved a mixture of practice (both controlled and communicative) and explanation (see Appendices A and B). Both classes were observed and video-recorded by the first author two times to ensure that the materials were being used similarly. In addition, during weeks 3 and 6, conversational partners attended the class for about 30 minutes to talk with the students, once for a mixer activity to practice the pronunciation of self-introductions that students had worked on and the second time to provide feedback on a drama practice activity based on Goodwin (2003).

Classroom Materials

The class was taught using materials from an unpublished pronunciation book (Levis & Muller Levis, n.d.). The materials included 13 lessons, which emphasized suprasegmentals and global features, including focus (four lessons), lexical stress (one lesson), rhythm (three lessons), intonation (two lessons), and thought groups/expressive speaking practice (three lessons). Only suprasegmentals were included in the pedagogical focus because of previous research indicating that, although comprehensibility in read speech could occur as a result of both a focus on segmentals and suprasegmentals, changes in comprehensibility for spontaneous speech were likely to occur only with instruction on suprasegmentals (Derwing et al., 1998). Because we did not want to conflate a pedagogical focus on segmentals and suprasegmentals, and because our study included spoken language that was produced spontaneously, we chose suprasegmentals as the most likely to lead to comprehensibility changes in both read and spontaneous speech. Each day of class used one lesson as its primary focus.

The Teachers

The instructors for the two pronunciation courses were female PhD students in applied linguistics and technology. One was a native speaker of American English, and the other was a native speaker of Turkish. Each teacher contributed four sentences to those rated in Rating Task 1. The NEST had an accentedness rating of 1.16 and a comprehensibility rating of 1.02. The NNEST's ratings were 3.01 for accentedness and 2.09 for comprehensibility. These ratings were the

average of the raters' evaluations of the teachers' speech samples. Including samples from the teachers ensured that there was a perceived difference between the teachers because of their language backgrounds. The ratings demonstrate this to be the case. The American English speaker was rated at the top of the scale for accentedness and comprehensibility, and the Turkish-speaking teacher was rated at a high level on the 9-point scale yet considerably lower in both accentedness and comprehensibility. Both had similar background preparation for teaching pronunciation, having taken the same graduate course in the teaching of pronunciation 1 year before the study, and both had similar experience teaching pronunciation through one-to-one directed pronunciation tutoring. They were also similar in age and physical appearance; both were ethnically indistinct (i.e., others had often reported being uncertain about their ethnic origins). We specifically chose ethnically indistinct teachers because teachers may sometimes be victims of reverse linguistic stereotyping based on perceived ethnicity (Rubin, 1992). Students were not told where the teachers were from, though there was no intent to hide the teachers' origins. Indeed, students in both classes asked their teachers where they were from within the first 2–3 weeks. When asked, the teacher answered truthfully. We had originally considered deception about the teachers' backgrounds, but we decided instead to not hide but never emphasize their backgrounds or native languages. In the posttest, the instructors were rated by students as having similar personalities in the classroom (discussed later in relation to information in Table 6). Two in-class observations and video recording by the first author indicated that the two teachers taught in similar ways, not only using the same activities in the same order, but following the same types of individual, pair, and group work strategies they had planned on. The many similarities between the two instructors assisted in controlling for confounding variables that may have otherwise impacted the results of the study.

In our study, we controlled as much as possible the variables related to the physical appearance of the teachers and their confidence and fluency in speaking. The students' proficiency levels (in this case, their pronunciation ability in English) and their previous experience with NNESTs were addressed through their desire to be in the class and the fact that almost all had learned English first in their home countries for at least 4 years and that all had been in the United States for at least 6 months at the time the classes began. We examined the students' perceptions of their teachers' ability to teach pronunciation in our research questions, leaving the L1 background of the teacher (that is, whether they were native or nonnative English speakers) as the primary variable being examined.

Quantitative Data Collection and Procedurest

Pretest and posttest speech samples. Before the classes began, students met with the first author for an interview. They recorded 25 sentences and provided spontaneous speech samples. The read speech samples were based on sentences from Munro and Derwing (2006). Each sentence was read aloud twice and was recorded in a quiet room using Audacity (a sound recording application) onto an Apple computer. We obtained spontaneous language samples through an informational interview and a narrative task in which students described their favorite holiday. Interviews and narrative tasks are among commonly used techniques to collect spontaneous speech samples in pronunciation studies (Breitkreutz et al., 2001; Derwing & Munro, 2013; Derwing, Thomson, & Munro, 2006). The read and spontaneous speech samples in the current study provided the basis for the rating tasks used once the course had ended.

Similar spoken language samples were collected for the posttest. For the sentence reading task, subjects read an additional 25 written sentences two times, again based on Munro and Derwing (2006). The 25 sentences in the posttest were different from those in the pretest. Finally, students took part in another interview and again provided a narrative describing their favorite holiday. We also included read and spontaneous sentences from six students (distractors) in another pronunciation study. Additional samples were included from the two teachers for a total of eight read speech samples (four sentences each) and eight spontaneous speech samples. We included the two teachers to ensure that raters would clearly distinguish the NEST and NNEST teachers as being different in accentedness and comprehensibility, thus justifying their classification as examples of native and nonnative; this process also assisted in providing criteria for excluding raters. We excluded several raters from the analysis based on their ratings of the native speaker distractor samples during the ratings tasks (explained below). If a rater assigned two or more ratings of 3 or greater to the NEST speech samples or 4 or greater to the NNEST samples, they were excluded from the data analysis. One rater from Rating Task 1 and three raters from Rating Task 2 were thus excluded; none of the other raters displayed a similar tendency. In a blind rating, raters in Rating Task 1 listened to 206 sentences that had been read aloud. Those in Rating Task 2 listened to the 206 sentences from spontaneous speech.

Stimuli preparation. Students read each of the 25 sentences two times; the second read sentence for each sample was separated into an individual file using Audacity. Following a completely randomized block design, each of the 24 class participants (18 students and 6

distractors) was associated with one of the 25 read sentences, leaving one of the 25 original sentences unassigned per block. The process of randomization, using a random number generator, was conducted four times to create four blocks of samples for the pretest and four blocks of samples for the posttest, for a total of 192 read sentences; that is, the final sample included eight sentences for each student, four from the pretest and four from the posttest readings. Each block contained no voice or sentence overlaps. The eight blocks were further organized based on when they were recorded (pre, post, post, pre, pre, post, post, pre).

In addition to the sentences from distractors, each block contained two control sentences, one sentence from each of the two teachers (two sentences in each block with no voice overlaps). These speech samples were evenly distributed within each block using alternative patterns of organization so the order in which the speakers appeared within a block was never the same. The final number of read speech samples was 206 sentences.

For the spontaneous speech samples, grammatically correct sentences with a minimum of eight syllables and an average length of 4.01 seconds were extracted and saved into individual files using Audacity. Four sentences were randomly selected for each student (i.e., if a student had 16 grammatically correct sentences, 4 were randomly chosen to be included). Procedures for preparing the files in a randomized block design were the same as the read speech sentences, resulting in another 206 sentences.

Before rating, all sentences were normalized at 0.0 dB to ensure comparable relative volume. The sentences were imported into an online questionnaire using a course management system. The questionnaire was checked for quality using a sample rater. Each sentence was identified as being clear in sound quality or not. Four sentences did not fulfill expectations and were repaired in Audacity, replaced with either the same sentence of better quality or, if that was not possible, the sentence that was not already represented in the block. (Recall that each group of sentences included 25 sentences but that there were only 24 speakers in each block.)

Rating Task 1. Rating Task 1 involved 33 raters (see Table 2) listening to read speech samples. Raters individually listened to the sentences using Skullcandy headphones on Apple computers in a computer lab. Before rating, they listened to directions and rated six sample sentences with different voices from what they would hear during the test. The six sentences were spoken by one native speaker and five nonnative speakers at differing levels of spoken ability. After the examples, subjects were given the opportunity to ask questions. Almost

TABLE 2
Rater Demographics for Rating Task 1 ($N = 33$)

	n	%
Age		
17–20	23	70
21 or older	10	30
Gender		
Male	8	24
Female	25	76
Origin		
Midwestern United States	28	85
Outside midwestern United States	5	15
Major		
Liberal arts and sciences	25	75
Other	8	24
Speaks a foreign language		
Yes	21	64
No	12	36
Lived abroad (> 1 month)		
Yes	6	18
No	27	82

Note. Raters who spoke a foreign language rated their speaking ability in their best foreign language on a scale of 1–6 (1 = *I speak it very well*; 6 = *I am not very good*). The majority rated their language at 4 (48%).

none did. Then, half of the raters rated accentedness first and half rated comprehensibility first to counterbalance the presentation of samples. After finishing the first set of ratings (about 25–30 minutes), subjects took a short break and were provided with orange juice and donuts to limit the chances of rater fatigue. They then did the second half of the task (about 25–30 minutes), listening to the same sentences in the same order but rating using the other scale (e.g., rating comprehensibility if they started on accentedness and vice versa).

Rating Task 2. Rating Task 2 followed the same procedure as Rating Task 1, but the sentences rated were taken from the spontaneous speech samples provided by the students for the pretest and posttest and were rated by 34 different native speaker raters (see Table 3 for rater demographics).

Qualitative Data Collection

Interview data were collected from the language learners in the two pronunciation classes at the same time the pretest and posttest speech samples were collected. During the posttest session, students were also asked to complete a brief questionnaire evaluating their instructor

TABLE 3
Rater Demographics for Rating Task 2 ($N = 34$)

	n	%
Age		
17–20	32	95
21 or older	2	5
Gender		
Male	4	12
Female	29	88
Origin		
Midwestern United States	33	97
Outside midwestern United States	1	3
Major		
Liberal arts and sciences	30	88
Other	4	12
Speaks a foreign language		
Yes	26	76
No	8	24
Lived abroad (> 1 month)		
Yes	6	18
No	28	82

Note. Raters who spoke a foreign language rated their speaking ability in their best foreign language on a scale of 1–6 (1 = *I speak it very well*; 6 = *I am not very good*). The majority rated their language at 5 (32%).

using eight scaled items. The pretest and posttest interviews each contained 12 semistructured questions. Pretest interviews elicited personal information about the students, students' interest in the pronunciation course, their prior pronunciation education, and their experiences when speaking English. Posttest interviews were conducted to collect information about students' perceptions of the class, their own pronunciation, and beliefs about NEST and NNEST teachers.

Data Analysis

The first research question determined the similarity in ratings of students' accentedness and comprehensibility in classes taught by NEST and NNEST teachers. Inter-rater reliability was assessed using Janson and Olsson's (2001) *iota*, which is a way of generalizing *kappa* (Cohen, 1968) to data of three or more raters, thus allowing for a multi-rater inter-rater reliability coefficient (see also Conger, 1980). The overall analysis yielded coefficients of .41 to .58, indicating a moderate level of inter-rater agreement for each of the rating categories: read speech accentedness = .41, read speech comprehensibility = .58, spontaneous speech accentedness = .55, and spontaneous speech comprehensibility = .52.

Assumptions for analysis of variance (ANOVA), including independent random sampling, the Levene test for homogeneity of variance, and normality, were examined and all were met. For Rating Task 1, we submitted the read speech accentedness and comprehensibility data from each rater ($N = 33$) to a two-way mixed design ANOVA with time (pretest or posttest) and teachers' language background (NEST or NNEST) as factors. We used an ANOVA parallel to the one used for read speech samples for spontaneous speech samples from raters ($N = 34$) in Rating Task 2.

Because in any given class some students may improve while others do not, we also analyzed individual improvement. This improvement was calculated using descriptive statistics to determine which students improved in all four categories (read speech accentedness, read speech comprehensibility, spontaneous speech accentedness, and spontaneous speech comprehensibility) and which did not improve in any of the categories. Table 4 shows the demographic information of these students. Five of eighteen students improved in all four categories and three lacked improvement in all categories. These cases were used to inform the qualitative analyses for the second research question.

To answer the second research question, "How do students evaluate their teacher's effectiveness as a pronunciation teacher?", all pre- ($N = 18$) and post-interviews ($N = 18$) were organized into Nvivo 10 and coded using inductive coding methods outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985). That is, overriding patterns in the data were grouped

TABLE 4
Students Whose Ratings Changed and Did Not Change for Accentedness and Comprehensibility

	Changed	Class	Origin	L1 background	Affiliation	Interest	Gender
Student 1	Yes	NNEST	China	Mandarin	Graduate student	Computer science	Male
Student 2	Yes	NNEST	Mexico	Spanish	Graduate student	Sustainable agriculture	Male
Student 3	Yes	NEST	Brazil	Portuguese	Visiting scholar		Female
Student 4	Yes	NEST	Uruguay	Spanish	Graduate student	Plant breeding	Male
Student 5	Yes	NEST	Vietnam	Vietnamese	Staff	Admissions	Male
Student 6	No	NNEST	China	Mandarin	Post-doc	Food science and nutrition	Female
Student 7	No	NNEST	China	Mandarin	Graduate student	Food science	Female
Student 8	No	NEST	Brazil	Portuguese	Visiting scholar	Gene pathology	Female

together into nodes. For example, pretest data were grouped into eight descriptive nodes: reasons for interest in the class, problems faced due to pronunciation, amount of speaking each day, practice in pronunciation, confidence, avoidance of native speakers, prior English learning, and instances of communication breakdown. Then the data were divided into smaller and more meaningful units; the node *reasons for interest in the class* was divided into others' criticism of accent, self-criticism, being misunderstood, poor test results, and job-related concerns. To check the reliability of the coding procedures and to compare interpretations of the data and ensure inter-coder reliability, a second coder coded a set of 10 transcripts (5 pre- and 5 post-interviews).

Coding queries were run in Nvivo 10 to extract data related to students who showed full improvement and from students who showed a lack of improvement in all of the four categories based on the descriptive statistics. Exploring the data in this way assisted us in evaluating why some students improved more than others. At this point in the analysis, themes began to emerge. Additional queries were run to extract patterns in the perspectives of students toward NESTs versus NNESTs. Questionnaire data were used to support findings from the interviews. In addition, the final data set was discussed through peer debriefing and peer editing (Esterberg, 2002) in the research group to validate the interpretation of results.

RESULTS

Rating Task 1: Read Speech

The first question examined the effect of teachers' language background on ratings of students' overall accentedness and comprehensibility. We subjected change in accentedness and comprehensibility to a two-way ANOVA having two levels of time (pretest or posttest) and two levels of teachers' language background (NEST or NNEST). We used an alpha level of .05 for all statistical tests. The main effect of time on ratings of accentedness yielded an F ratio of $F(1, 127) = 0.35$, $p = 0.56$, $\eta^2 = .003$, indicating that the mean change score was not significantly different for the posttest ($M = 5.90$, $SD = 1.06$) than for the pretest ($M = 6.00$, $SD = 1.00$). The main effect of teachers' language background yielded an F ratio of $F(1, 127) = 7.17$, $p = .008$, $\eta^2 = .055$, indicating that the mean change score was significantly different for the NEST class ($M = 5.72$, $SD = 1.01$) compared to in the NNEST class ($M = 6.19$, $SD = 0.97$). The interaction effect was nonsignificant, $F(1, 127) = 0.54$, $p = 0.46$, $\eta^2 = .004$. Though the NEST students received better accentedness ratings, Tukey (Honest Significant Difference)

tests failed to show a difference between the NNEST and NEST students' accentedness ratings at the time of the posttest.

The results for comprehensibility yielded a main effect for time, $F(1, 127) = 0.18$, $p = 0.67$, $\eta^2 = .001$, such that the average rating was not significantly higher for the posttest ($M = 3.94$, $SD = 0.97$) than for the pretest ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 1.02$). The main effect of teachers' language background was also nonsignificant, $F(1, 127) = 1.50$, $p = 0.22$, $\eta^2 = .012$. The mean change score was not significantly different for the NEST class ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 1.01$) compared to the NNEST class ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 0.97$). The interaction effect was again nonsignificant, $F(1, 127) = 0.18$, $p = 0.67$, $\eta^2 = .001$. Tukey (Honest Significant Difference) tests failed to show a difference between NNEST and NEST students' comprehensibility ratings at the time of the posttest.

Rating Task 2: Spontaneous Speech

The second experiment examined differences on ratings of students' overall accentedness and comprehensibility based on their spontaneous speech samples (see Table 5). We submitted the raters' judgment data to an ANOVA parallel to the one used for read speech data. Once again, the main effect of time on ratings of accentedness was nonsignificant, yielding an F ratio of $F(1, 123) = -0.43$, $p = 0.66$, $\eta^2 = .002$. The results indicate that the mean change score was not significantly different for the posttest ($M = 5.93$, $SD = 0.97$) compared to the pretest ($M = 6.00$, $SD = 1.06$). The main effect of teachers' language background yielded an F ratio of $F(1, 123) = 3.09$, $p = 0.002$, $\eta^2 = .074$, indicating that the mean change score was significantly different in the NEST class ($M = 5.69$, $SD = 1.03$) and the NNEST class ($M = 6.24$, $SD = 0.93$). The interaction effect was nonsignificant, $F(1, 123) = 0.13$, $p = 0.90$, $\eta^2 = .000$.

The results for comprehensibility yielded a main effect for time, $F(1, 123) = 1.41$, $p = 0.24$, $\eta^2 = .012$, such that the average rating was

TABLE 5
Summary of Two-Way ANOVA Results by Time and Teachers' Language Background

	Time Pretest and posttest	Language background NNEST and NEST
Experiment 1: Read speech		
Accentedness	No difference	Difference
Comprehensibility	No difference	No difference
Experiment 2: Spontaneous speech		
Accentedness	No difference	Difference
Comprehensibility	No difference	No difference

not significantly different for the posttest ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 1.09$) compared to the pretest ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 1.11$). The main effect of teachers' language background was also nonsignificant, $F(1, 123) = 3.44$, $p = 0.07$, $\eta^2 = .028$. The mean change score was not significantly different for the NEST class ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 1.03$) compared to the NNEST class ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.15$). The interaction effect was nonsignificant, $F(1, 123) = 0.02$, $p = 0.88$, $\eta^2 = .000$. Tukey tests failed to show a difference between NNEST and NEST students' accentedness and comprehensibility ratings at the time of the posttest.

At the individual level, ratings for five students (two from the NNEST class and three from the NEST class; see Figure 2) showed improvement in comprehensibility and accentedness for read and spontaneous speech. The remaining students in the two classes showed mixed improvement, improving in comprehensibility and/or accentedness in read and/or spontaneous speech. Individual variability was investigated using the qualitative data from the students who improved and those who did not.

Qualitative Results

Quantitative results for both read and spontaneous speech were supplemented by qualitative data from the interviews. As in many teaching effectiveness studies, students showed varied progress, from those whose ratings showed improvement across the board to those whose ratings showed no improvement for either read or spontaneous speech. To delve into why some students improved and others did not, we conducted a qualitative analysis of students' interviews. Results showed that the students who improved frequently felt misunderstood

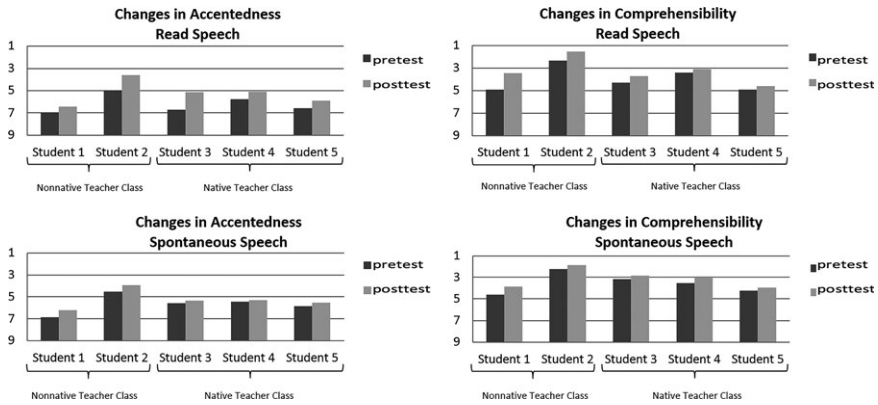

FIGURE 2. Individual changes in four categories of ratings.

by other interlocutors, usually because of their pronunciation, as in the following quote.

> We usually have group meetings and I had to present every 2 weeks but when I was the presenter it's very hard I think. It's very hard to make my audience understand me in the topic especially when the topic is new and they don't have the background about the topics, I think it's really hard to make them understand me.
>
> (Student 1, pre-interview)

One of the improved students joined the class because his pronunciation was not up to the level of his expectations. "I've been here for a while, but it's still not at the point that I like so I have to improve it" (Student 5, pre-interview). However, this attitude was not expressed only by those who improved. One student who did not improve attended the class due to poor test results: "This semester I am also a TA [teaching assistant] for another food microbiology lab, and I took the speak teach test and, but I only got level 3, that means I'm not qualified to speak in front of the whole class."

Of those who improved, three acknowledged that they speak English outside of class quite often. This was the key difference between the groups. "During office hours almost all the time because everyone in my office is ... I mean from other countries; we speak in English ... but at home I speak in Spanish" (Student 2, pre-interview). Although the three said that they used English outside of class, none of them used English at home. This lack of at-home English use was shared by students who did not improve. Those who did not show any improvement expressed a consistent lack of outside language use. For instance, Student 6 stated, "Sometimes I couldn't speak one word in English in one day."

The lack of time interacting in English also transferred to a lack of English practice. Only one of the improved students said that she practiced pronunciation intentionally:

> I got in library the I don't know the book for pronunciation and I listen and repeat myself, and I have a Brazilian friend that lived here more than 20 years and she helps me one time a week. I go to her home and we talk and listen.
>
> (Student 3, pre-interview)

Most noteworthy was the expression of confidence between improvers and those who did not improve. All of the students who improved commented that their confidence had increased since the beginning of class. In response to the question "How confident are you in speaking English with native speakers?" one respondent said, "Now I feel

more accurate with the pronunciation, but I don't have to repeat several words as much as I did before" (Student 2, post-interview).

Those who did not improve by any measure were uncertain about their confidence. Student 6's level of confidence revealed some discomfort at the post-interview. She commented, "I'm not so confident (laughs)." The other two had mixed feelings:

1. Depends on which kind of person I talk to, you know, like sometimes I feel confident but sometimes I don't feel confident. (Student 7, post-interview)
2. It depends on the native speakers because I have some American friend, and it's easier to speak with her because she corrects me and don't laugh, and it's interesting. (Student 8, post-interview)

Students' confidence was connected to their feelings of improvement. Those who showed improvement also felt that their pronunciation improved by the end of the class, such as in the example of Student 2: "So far for the people that I have been talking with, in some aspects they have noticed some changes." Comments were similar for the other improvers: "I think I did. I don't know if people can understand me better now but at least I know how to ... try to pronounce better" (Student 4, post-interview). Others could even indicate in what ways they improved. "I think I improved my English ... maybe now I can think that I need to put more stress on the last words or the negative words" (Student 3, post-interview).

The three that did not improve were uncertain about their improvement. One student commented, "I think [the class] met my expectations but ... I mean we need more time to you know to improve our pronunciation ... I think it's just a one month" (Student 7, post-interview). This reflects other comments from students who struggled to improve. They often talked about how they intended to work on their pronunciation when they had time after the semester. Oddly, despite voluntarily taking a pronunciation class, they did not make practice a priority.

Students' Perceptions of NEST and NNEST's Effectiveness

Although students overall did not show great improvement in their pronunciation, it was also clear that the teachers' language background did not have an impact on students' learning. In fact, Table 6 shows that all 18 students rated their teachers equally high in multiple categories of the final questionnaire.

TABLE 6
Students' Evaluation of Their Teachers and the Class

Overall ratings (1 = *very good*; 5 = *very poor*)	NNEST	NEST
Overall rating of your teacher is	1.4	1.5
Overall rating of the course is	1.5	1.6
Evaluation of teachers' teaching (1 = *strongly agree*; 5 = *strongly disagree*)	**NNEST**	**NEST**
The instructor was prepared for classes.	1.1	1.2
The instructor presented the subject matter effectively.	1.5	1.6
The instructor appeared to enjoy teaching.	1.1	1.0
I am glad I had the opportunity to study with this teacher.	1.1	1.1
Evaluation of teachers' personality	**NNEST**	**NEST**
(1) *Unfriendly* — (7) *Very friendly*	6.9	6.9
(1) *Reserved* — (7) *Energetic*	6.5	6.4
(1) *Boring* — (7) *Enthusiastic*	6.5	6.6
(1) *Distant* — (7) *Approachable*	6.8	6.7
(1) *Disorganized* — (7) *Organized*	6.5	6.4

The high individual ratings of the teachers, however, were not reflective of students' perceptions of native and nonnative pronunciation teachers in general. Figure 3 shows that the majority of students interviewed expressed a preference for having a native teacher for a pronunciation class.

During the interviews, students did not have a preference for native or nonnative grammar or reading teachers, but when the interviewer asked about preference for a speaking class, students replied confidently that a native teacher would be better; however, they typically struggled to explain why. When the interviewer asked about pronunciation, the answer was again definitive. This pattern recurred among most of the students interviewed, reflecting students' beliefs that pronunciation (and, to a lesser extent, speaking) skills could only be effectively taught by native speakers. This native teacher bias for pronunciation teaching reflects a fallacy in which teaching certain skills is not connected to competence as a teacher but to circumstances of birth and upbringing.

DISCUSSION

A major finding of this study is that there was no significant impact of teachers' language backgrounds on students' overall improvement of comprehensibility and accentedness. Students in neither the NEST's nor the NNEST's class showed a significant overall improvement in their

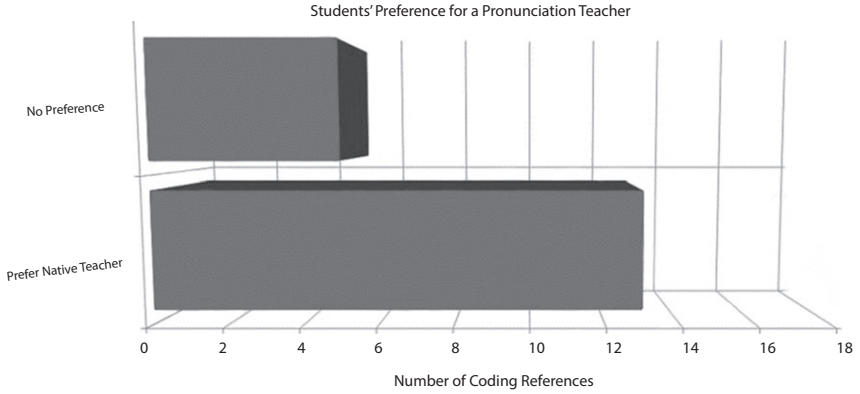

FIGURE 3. Students' preferences for a native or nonnative pronunciation teacher.

comprehensibility or accentedness. Rating for students in both classes were similar in read speech ratings and spontaneous speech ratings.

These findings suggest that discomfort with NNESTs on the part of students and the teachers themselves may often be misplaced. NNESTs are regularly reported to lack confidence in their ability to be a good model, but students in these classes showed the same level of satisfaction with native and nonnative teachers. Raters clearly heard the two teachers as being different, with the NNEST being rated as slightly less comprehensible and more accented. Even though we did not tell students during the study whether their teacher was native or not, in the final interviews we asked them about what they knew of their teacher's language background. Although student evaluations were positive, indicating they liked their NNEST and thought she was an effective teacher, students' interviews suggested that most preferred a native speaker as a pronunciation teacher despite rating the NNEST teacher as highly as the NEST teacher. They seemed to believe that having an NEST would somehow result in greater improvement by "catching" pronunciation in much the same way one catches a cold, through exposure alone (for more on this, see LeVelle & Levis, 2014; Levis, 2015). The "catching a cold" metaphor also may explain their stated uncertainty about NNESTs, who could potentially infect them with bad pronunciation. Their willingness to express a preference for an NEST in regard to pronunciation teaching reflects the power of the *nativeness principle* over the *intelligibility principle* (Levis, 2005). However, the results suggest that their beliefs are mistaken and that even though a native speaker bias for pronunciation was strong, learning pronunciation is likely to be dependent upon factors other than whether the teacher is an NNEST or an NEST.

However, the perception that NNESTs have a *lesser English* (Mahboob et al., 2004) in relation to pronunciation is likely to be more

complicated than our study of a single NNEST and NEST can reflect. Our NNEST's spoken language was rated high on the 9-point scale and higher on average by a couple of points than the students she was teaching. We do not know whether our findings would have been similar with a teacher whose comprehensibility and accentedness ratings were lower. This is a question for future research. It is clear that a much wider range of factors may be involved in reactions to NNESTs (and NESTs), including learner familiarity with a teacher, the lexical density associated with pronunciation deviations (Imai, Walley, & Flege, 2005), and students' previous experience with other NESTs and NNESTs. It is reasonable to assume that NESTs may get a pass on many areas simply because they are native speakers, while NNESTs may feel they have to prove that they are trustworthy. Clearly identifiable errors in an NNEST's spoken language may damage a learner's confidence in the teacher as a reliable model (as several of our colleagues have reported to us), while an unexpected pronunciation from an NEST may be passed over without a second thought.

Although our goal was to examine whether NESTs and NNESTs were different in the level of improvement achieved by students, the lack of significant changes in ratings of read and spontaneous speech was disappointing. This may have been a result of our methodology. Unlike other studies, we randomly chose multiple read and spontaneous sentences for evaluation, both from the pretest and the posttest. The sentences from the pretest and posttest may not have been fully equivalent. In addition, our use of spontaneous speech involved extracting fully grammatical sentences from extended discourse. Because comprehensibility judgments include more than pronunciation (Isaacs & Trofimovich, 2012; Saito et al., 2015), our use of sentences rather than extended discourse may have limited raters' ability to evaluate comprehensibility and may not have shown changes in comprehensibility that actually occurred. Additionally, the inter-rater reliability between raters of both rating tasks likely impacted the quantitative results. The moderate reliability of the ratings may have resulted from the numbers of sentences we included for each speaker or the length of the rating task, but it limits our confidence in the findings.

Nonetheless, five students (two in the NNEST's class and three in the NEST's class) improved in both accentedness and comprehensibility based on their read and spontaneous speech samples. Based on the qualitative findings of the study, the changes for these five students may be explained with two learner-oriented variables: motivation and outside use of the target language.

Motivation has been found to be influential in L2 success (Dörnyei, 2001; Gardner, 1985, 2007; Noels, 2001). Motivation is a driving force for pronunciation as well. Simply taking the class for 7 weeks may

show that students were similarly motivated, but students whose ratings increased expressed clear goals to improve their pronunciation (i.e., being understood by the audience when they give a presentation). Those whose ratings did not change lacked the clear goals that their peers showed.

Connected to motivation, use of the target language seems to be another critical learner-oriented factor required for improvement of second language pronunciation (Derwing, 2008; Lecumberri & Gallardo, 2003). Use of, and exposure to, the target language is not always a learner's own choice, especially in EFL settings. However, ESL settings alone do not guarantee sufficient exposure to the target language unless learners make an effort to interact using the target language. Celce-Murcia, Brinton, Goodwin, and Griner (2010) describe ESL learners who "live in linguistic islands with little exposure to the target language in their homes and even in their worksites" (p. 18). In our study, three of the speakers whose ratings changed for both accentedness and comprehensibility reported a large amount of exposure to English because of the use of English in the worksite. Speakers whose ratings did not change, in contrast, complained that they did not speak in English outside of class; some days they did not speak even a single word of English.

CONCLUSION

This study suggests that being an NNEST or NEST is not a critical factor in teachers being effective pronunciation teachers. NESTs are not likely to be effective simply because they are native, nor are NNESTs likely to be ineffective because they are not native. Like any other language skill, pronunciation can be taught equally well by NNESTs and NESTs, a conclusion that should bolster the confidence of skilled NNESTs and NESTs alike.

The results also indicate that the last bastion of native speaker privilege, pronunciation teaching, should not be a specialized club only for native-like pronouncers. This rather unremarkable conclusion simply recognizes reality. Pronunciation is an essential component for comprehensible speech, a goal for almost all language learners. Development of comprehensibility does not require native speakers, as it is unlikely that students will catch good pronunciation from native speakers and equally unlikely that they will catch bad pronunciation from nonnative speakers (Levis, 2015). If only teaching pronunciation were so simple! Nonnative teachers, as in all language skills, bring tremendous advantages to the teaching of pronunciation. They know what it is like to learn the target language, and they understand the tricks and pitfalls their students may fall into. In addition, the field

needs nonnative teachers. Native speakers are a minority of language teachers in the world, and if pronunciation is to be taught, it must be taught by all kinds of qualified teachers. If this study suggests anything, it is that native-speaker status does not count as a qualification.

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APPENDIX A

OVERALL TEACHING PLAN

Week	Day 1 (M or T)	Day 2 (W or Th)	Other
	Pronunciation Emphasis		
1	Focus (Last word)	Word stress	
2	Expressive Speaking (Pitch, length, volume, clarity)	Phrase rhythm (Stressed and unstressed words)	
3	Focus (in repeated questions)	Phrase rhythm (Casual speech modifications)	Conversation partners
4	Focus (Last content word)	Phrase Rhythm (predicting rhythm)	
5	Thought groups	Intonation (rising and falling)	
6	Thought groups	Focus (contrastive)	Conversation partners
7	Thought groups	Scene acting (Goodwin, 2003)	Posttest

Focus – The use of pitch and length to emphasize particular words at the phrase level, e.g., the capitalized words in the dialogue *How ARE you? FINE. How are YOU?* receive the focus. This feature of English is sometimes called nuclear stress, sentence stress, or tonic.

Word stress – The use of length, pitch, intensity and vowel quality features that make some syllables easier to hear than others in English, e.g., *conTROL* is stressed on the second syllable. The first syllable is unstressed and its vowel is likely to be reduced to schwa. Word stress is connected to issues of phrase rhythm and focus and was addressed (though not heavily emphasized) for that reason.

Expressive speaking – The global use of the voice for projection, including pitch, length, volume, and clarity)

Phrase rhythm – The alternations of stressed and unstressed syllables in English that sometimes leads to it being called a stress-timed language, e.g., the italicized words and syllables in the sentence "The *man* in the *car* has been *sleep*ing for *hours*" are stressed while the others typically are not.

Intonation – The use of pitch at the ends of phrases to mark discourse meanings. Most common are the distinctions between rising

and falling pitch as in *Ready? Ready.* Other pitch movements also occur, but were not included in the instruction.

Thought Groups – Putting words together in logical phrases that provide the infrastructure for suprasegmentals, e.g., "The *man* in the *car* / has been *sleep*ing / for *hours" could be spoken in 1, 2, or 3 phrases that are grammatically coherent and each have their own rhythmic, focus, and intonational patterns.*

APPENDIX B

EXAMPLE TEACHING MATERIALS FROM DAY 1 OF CLASS

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Introducing yourself

NORMAL PHRASE FOCUS

This chapter gives you practice in introducing yourself to others and in saying your name so that your listeners will easily be able to understand you. English-speaking listeners understand best when names have spoken "music" that fits their ears. In English, using normal phrase focus is essential to making the right music. If names are spoken with other types of spoken music (like Chinese or French spoken music), English-speaking listeners often have trouble hearing and understanding what you say.

1 WARMUP

Directions: Person 1 introduces him/herself to the person on their right. Continue around the room.

EXAMPLE: Teacher: Hi. I'm Amanda (First/Given name) Smith (Family/last name).

Student 1: Hello. I'm Jing Qin.

(next) Student 2: Hello. I'm Elena Lopez.

Student 3: I'm Eun-Ha Jung.

Exercise 1 Listen to the conversation and fill in the words that are missing.

A: Are these the auditions?

B: Yeah. They've just [*started*].

A: Good. Then I'm not too [ ]. I'm [ ].

B: Hi, I'm [ ]. Have you ever sung in a [ ].

A: Yeah, but not for a long [ ].

I thought this would be a good way to make new [ ].

B: Yeah, we're a pretty friendly [ ]. So, I need your [ ]name.

And whether you sing tenor or [ ].

A: [ ] [ ]. I sing tenor.

B: Great. Oh, this is our director, Maya [ ]. Maya, this is Chris Johnson.

He's auditioning [ ].

What is focus?

Focus refers to the way English speakers call attention to important parts of a conversation. Focus is necessary to communicate effectively.

Focus follows clear patterns in English. You cannot simply put focus on any word you like. The focused word needs to be the one the listener expects. A different focused word may change the meaning or make the meaning unclear.

Focus has two main qualities. Both are important.

1. Length. A focused word must be said for a much longer time than non-focused words.
2. Pitch change. A focused word must have a change in voice pitch. It usually jumps up to a higher pitch, but it can also drop to a lower pitch, especially on questions that rise at the end.

Focus words can also have greater loudness, though this is not so important in English.

EXAMPLE **Hi, I'm Chris J o h n s o n .**

Exercise 2 Listen again to the conversation. Underline the focused word in each sentence, as in the first line of the dialogue.

Chris: Are these the auditions?

Terry: Yeah. They've just started.

Chris: Good. Then I'm not too late. I'm Chris.

Terry: Hi, I'm Terry. Have you ever sung in a choir?

Chris: Yeah, but not for a long time. I thought this would be a good way to make new friends.

Terry: Yeah, we're a pretty friendly group. So, I need your full name.

And whether you sing tenor or bass.

Chris: Chris Johnson. I sing tenor.

Terry: Great. Oh, this is our director / Maya Garcia. Maya / this is Chris Johnson. He's auditioning next.

Exercise 3 **Pairs.** Read the conversation with another student. Lengthen your syllables and change your pitch to show the correct focus.

Normal Focus and Names

Which word usually gets the focus?

Every phrase has a focused word. Normal focus is usually on the last word of the phrase. For example:

A: Are these the auditions?
B: Yeah. They've just started.

Because names usually are the last word in a phrase, they usually are the focused word. For example:

A: Good. Then I'm not too late. I'm Chris.

Exercise 4 Whole Class. Introduce yourself to at least three other people you do not know. Put focus on the last word in the phrase.

EXAMPLE: Teacher: Hi. I'm Ahmed (First/Given name) Al-Hamri (Family/last name).

Student 1: Hello. I'm Wang Lin.

Focus Patterns on Names

Names usually follow normal focus patterns. If you say more than one word in a name, put the focus on the last word in the name. For example, if you say your first name and then your last name, put focus on your last name. When you say a place name, put focus on the last word in the place name.

Example: I'm Maya Garcia. I'm from London, England.

Exercise 5 Say the place names on the map with the correct focus. Add your own city and country.

Exercise 6 **Pairs.** Practice the dialogue with a new partner. Use true information about yourself. Put focus on the last word in the blanks. In other phrases, put focus on the underlined word.

A: Hi. I'm _____.

B: Hi. My name's _____.

Where are you <u>from</u>?

A: I'm from _____.

How about <u>you</u>?

B: I'm from _____.

COMMUNICATION PRACTICE

Exercise 7 **Small groups.** If you could visit one place, city, or country in the world, where would you go? Tell the other group members why you chose that place.

Example 1 "I'd love to go to Buxton, North Carolina. It's a small town on the Outer Banks. The Outer Banks are narrow islands off the coast of North Carolina in the Atlantic Ocean. I'd love to go enjoy the sand and sun and sea."

Example 2 "If I could, I'd visit the Himalaya mountains in India. They are the highest mountains in the world, and I would love to go there and hike and see how really huge mountains look."

Preparation: (2-3 minutes) Write down notes about what you want to say.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

But it doesn't sound like my name!!

English speakers expect to hear names said with an English focus pattern. If the pattern is unfamiliar, they may not hear you, even if you speak perfectly clearly. This may mean that English speaking listeners will remember your name better if you say it with an English focus pattern.

Exercise 8 **Pairs.** Interview another partner. Take notes. Ask about their name and where they're from. Also ask about other information. For example, find out what they are studying or where they work, where they would like to visit, and what kinds of hobbies they are interested in. Then introduce the other person to the class.

Space for taking notes

SPELLING YOUR NAME ALOUD

You may need to spell your name aloud when you are on the phone or at an appointment, especially if your name is unfamiliar to your listener.

Many letter names are hard to understand, even for native speakers. Sometimes it helps to give a key word so listeners will know which letter is being used. A common strategy is to say the letter and then a common name or a word clue. For example, "S as in Sam."

Examples

"s as in Sam"	"v as in Victor"	"r as in Ruby"
"f as in Frank"	"m as in mother"	"l as in loud"
"b as in boy"	"n as in Nancy"	"t as in Tom"
"p as in Peter"	"z as in zone"	"d as in dog"

Exercise 9 Say your full name to the class. Then spell it aloud so everyone has time to write it down. Repeat the spelling if someone needs to hear it again.

Example: "My name is John Levis.
J - O - H - N - S - (as in Sam) -M - I - T - ('T' as in Tom) H"

Write down the names of some of your classmates.

_____
_____
_____